

# Navy studies dump and birth defects

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An independent hydrologist will determine if long-buried dump sites and landfills at the Naval Air Development Center could be related to birth defects in six children, the Navy said.

Joseph P. Cody, public affairs officer at NADC, confirmed yesterday the hiring of the hydrologist to carry out extensive tests at the military facility in Warminster Township.

Those tests include the drilling of 17 wells within the base and one well in a township park.

The water from those wells will be monitored and analyzed for any toxics or pollutants that could have led to the birth defects. The children's mothers, during their pregnancies, resided at or spent time in a neighborhood in the Davisville section of the township, adjacent to the NADC.

"We don't want anyone thinking that the Navy was responsible for any of that," said Cody. He said he will formally ask permission from the township supervisors Monday night to sink the well at the park, off Kirk Road.

Cody said the Navy believes it has a "social obligation" to determine by scientific investigation if the source of the alleged pollution could derive from any portion of the military installation.

JRB Associates of McLean, Va., has been hired by the Navy to con-

duct the tests and monitor the samples, Cody said, adding the contract for the work is about \$90,000.

Cody said the decision to test NADC is part of a new Navy policy to examine all the buried landfills on Navy property. When NADC officials heard of the policy, they applied to the Navy for priority in having tests conducted in Warminster, Cody said.

"At the time the scare occurred, some people questioned whether unknown sources (of pollution) may have come from the NADC," Cody said.

After a preliminary investigation, the Bucks County Health Department concluded the Navy installation was not the source of any contaminants that may have resulted in the defect births.

Nevertheless, Cody said, "The thing kept rearing its head."

So, "in order to be conscientious," the Navy wanted to know for sure whether anything it did in the past may have been harmful.

All the children were born in the first six months of 1980.

## Setting it right

A story yesterday about traffic problems in Langhorne caused by a detour for the Route 1 Superhighway incorrectly reported the state transportation department had failed to announce the detour route ahead of time. A PennDOT press release distributed last week outlined the detour route.

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